

CLAIMS

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for performing work in at least one of a plurality of lateral pipes connected to a main pipe, comprising the steps of:

loading a lateral device into at least one lateral pipe from the main pipe;

anchoring said lateral device to the at least one lateral pipe;

utilizing said lateral device to perform work on or within the at least one lateral pipe; and

unloading said lateral device from the at least one lateral pipe to the main pipe.

2. A method for opening a lateral pipe after relining of a main connected thereto, comprising the steps of:

inserting a lateral device into at least one lateral pipe from the main;

relining said main; and

cutting the lateral open.

3. The method of Claim 2, wherein said lateral device is autonomous.

4. The method of Claim 2, wherein said cutting step is performed from within the lateral by said lateral device.

5. The method of Claim 2, further comprising the step of:

after said relining and before said cutting steps, sending an electrically generated signal from the lateral device into the main.

6. The method of Claim 5, wherein said electrically generated signal is visible light.

7. The method of Claim 5, wherein said electrically generated signal is sent in response to an onboard proximity sensor.

8. The method of Claim 2, further comprising the steps of:

before said relining step, inserting a second lateral device into a second lateral pipe.

9. A lateral device, comprising:

a lateral device housing;

an anchor device to secure said housing to an inner wall of a first pipe which intersects with a second pipe; and

a work tool.

10. The lateral device of Claim 9, wherein said work tool is a rotary bit cutting tool.

11. The lateral device of Claim 10, wherein a rotating arm supporting said rotary bit cutting tool is spring biased against the inner wall of the first pipe.

12. The lateral device of Claim 9, wherein said work tool is a hole saw cutting tool.

13. The lateral device of Claim 9, wherein said work tool is a grinding device cutting tool.

14. The lateral device of Claim 13, wherein said grinding device includes spring tensioning that automatically adjusts a cutting diameter of the grinding device to the size of the inside wall of the first pipe.

15. The lateral device of Claim 9, wherein said work tool is an electrically generated signal source.

16. The lateral device of Claim 9, wherein said work tool is an attachment adapted to drag a liner up into said first pipe from the second pipe.

17. The lateral device of Claim 9, further comprising:

an onboard power source for powering said work device from the lateral device.

18. The lateral device of Claim 9, wherein a state of said work tool is determined based on local decision-making from on board the lateral device.

19. A system for performing work within a lateral pipe connected to a main pipe, comprising:

at least one lateral device;

a delivery device for moving said at least one lateral cutting device into a position in proximity to said lateral pipe from within the main pipe, wherein said device carrier includes an insertion mechanism to push the lateral device at least partially within the lateral pipe from the main pipe.

20. The system of claim 19, wherein the lateral device includes treads for climbing the lateral pipe.

21. The system of Claim 19, wherein said delivery device carries more than one lateral devices.

22. The system of Claim 19, wherein said insertion device is an inflatable bellows.